



Executive Officer's Statement

Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board

June 16, 2005



Board Marks Four Decades of Service

On July 21, the Board will commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Victim Compensation Program. The focus will be on "Honoring the work we do and those who do it, and celebrating 40 years of service to victims." The Honorable Lois Haight, Superior Court Judge in Contra Costa County and Chair of the 1982 President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, is the keynote speaker. The event will take place at the Sacramento Library's Tsakapoulos Library Galleria. The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board's current and former employees, victim advocates around the state, officials from other state agencies that provide services to victims, and other service providers will receive invitations to the event.

Forty years ago, California became the first state in the nation to provide compensation for victims of violent crime when Governor Edmund G. Brown signed legislation on July 16, 1965 establishing the Victim Compensation Program. The Program became the third in the world, with only Britain and New Zealand having compensation programs at that time.

Since its inception, the Program has helped nearly 900,000 victims and their family members and paid out more than \$1.5 billion. Over the past four decades state and local government, working with victim support organizations, has provided crucial services to California's crime victims and their families. More than 100 victim assistance centers in 58 California counties help crime victims obtain access to services and compensation.

The Board is very proud of the success of the Program, its achievements and the help provided to so many victims of crime. The 40th Anniversary will provide the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board an opportunity to reflect upon the many accomplishments of the past quarter century as well as challenges in the future.

Federal Funding Update

The Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) was enacted to provide federal financial support for services to victims of crime. VOCA, supported by fines paid by offenders convicted of federal crimes, is the only federal grant program supporting direct assistance services to victims of all types of crimes and supplementing state victim compensation funds.

A proposal in the federal budget would remove \$1.2 billion from the federal Crime Victims Fund. These funds would support future federal, state and local victim services. Potentially, that action could mean that funds would not be available for victim services from VOCA at the beginning of FFY 2007.

On May 24, the House Appropriations Subcommittee did not approve the removal of \$1.2 billion from the federal Crime Victims Fund as proposed and it appears that the Fund will remain in place.

New Members Join the Board's Executive Team

In June the Board welcomed two new executive staff members. Tom O'Connor joined the Board on June 1 as the Chief Deputy Executive Officer, replacing Richard Anderson who retired

in May. Previously, Mr. O'Connor served for over 18 years as the Executive Officer for the Board of Psychology. His many accomplishments include moving the Board of Psychology from an "Examining Committee" under the authority of the Medical Board to its status today of an independent and nationally respected Board. He has extensive experience with the Legislature, regulations, and control agencies; has developed strategic plans; and is an advocate of world-class consumer service.

Mr. O'Connor has worked with the Board staff in the past, assisting in the development of the process that ensures the Board reimburses only licensed mental health providers. He has volunteered many hours with the Sacramento County Suicide Prevention Service and worked as an intern at Starting Point, an alcohol and drug rehabilitation center. Mr. O'Connor has also been recognized nationally, he was the first non-psychologist to be awarded the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Board Roger C. Smith Award for significant contributions to the regulation of the profession of psychology.

Laura Hill has been appointed Deputy Executive Officer for the Revenue Recovery and Accounting Division. Previously Ms. Hill was the Interim Deputy Executive Officer and Manager of the Revenue Recovery and Accounting Division. She has been with the Board nearly six years and serves as the Board's restitution representative at meetings and conferences with judges, district attorneys, sister agencies, and the Legislature. Ms. Hill developed training for district attorneys and probation departments on restitution implementation, managed the Criminal Restitution Compact contracts, headed the Board's various collection efforts and guided the Board's collaboration with the Franchise Tax Board's Court Ordered Debt Collection Program.

Board Updates

Government Claims Program Meets with Department Coordinators

The Government Claims Program held a meeting with all state departments' Government Claim Coordinators on Wednesday, June 1, 2005, in the Employment Development Department Auditorium from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The meeting covered the important changes that have been and will be made in the fees and procedures affecting claimants and departments involved in government claims. Among the other topics discussed were filing fees and waivers, surcharges, and timeliness of department responses.

Victim Compensation Advisory Committee Meeting

The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board hosted its quarterly Victim Compensation Advisory Committee meeting at the Board's Sacramento office on Wednesday, June 15. The 12-member advisory committee is composed of representatives from state agencies and other entities serving victims. The presentation from the Department of Justice covered the summary of recommendations made by the Attorney General's Task Force on Domestic Violence and the San Diego Children's Hospital's presentation focused on evidence-based mental health treatment.

Restitution Training for Probation Officers

The Restitution staff will present training to Sacramento County probation officers on June 9.

Outreach Visits to Joint Powers Counties

Board staff will visit verification units in Victim Witness Centers located in Santa Clara County, San Francisco County, Los Angeles City and Los Angeles County in June.